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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 006991

SIPDIS

NSC STAFF FOR POUNDS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/08/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: DOMESTIC MONITORS ISSUE PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

REF: A. CAIRO 6200

[B](#). CAIRO 6137

Classified by ECPO Minister Counselor Michael Corbin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

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Summary  
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[1](#). (C) Several Egyptian civil society groups which observed the September 7 election have issued preliminary findings. Although the election results have not yet been announced--and will likely remain unknown until Saturday at the earliest--the domestic monitors are wasting no time in criticizing the conduct of the elections. Given the long history of adversarial relations between the GOE and some of the civil society activists who were key to the monitoring effort--as well as the unwillingness of the GOE to clarify access rules for domestic monitors until after voting began--is not surprising that many of their preliminary findings accentuated the negative. We look forward to reviewing the final reports of the civil society monitors, carefully reviewing their evidence, and determining how their work can support additional democratic reform. End summary.

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Independent Coalition for the Election Monitoring  
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[2](#). (SBU) ICEM, the beneficiary of USAID-funded training from the National Democratic Institute and of MEPI funding for its September 7 monitoring exercise, has issued a series of updates, the most recent at 1400 local time on September 8. ICEM noted that its 2,200 domestic observers, organized by a coalition of 12 civil society groups, had been pleased with the "relative absence of violence" and welcomed the cooperation by state security services in ensuring the safety of the monitors. ICEM acknowledged the importance of Egypt's first competitive presidential election and welcomed the decision by the Presidential Election Commission (PEC), shortly after the start of voting on September 7, to admit domestic monitors to the polls. ICEM noted that notwithstanding the PEC's decision, many judges and election officials refused to allow access by domestic monitors, as well as candidate agents, "in a significant number of polling stations."

[3](#). (SBU) According to ICEM's calculations, voter turnout did not exceed 18 percent. ICEM called attention to widespread efforts by NDP activists to convince/pressure voters to cast their ballots for Mubarak at the polling stations. Among these efforts was a nationwide distribution effort by the NDP of a "Voter's Guide Card." At many stations, NDP officials controlling the desks with the voter lists gave approved voters cards, emblazoned with Mubarak's campaign photo and logo, which directed voters where to cast their votes.

[4](#). (SBU) ICEM also saw voter lists with the names of minors and dead people, husbands voting for themselves and their wives, and NDP activists providing small cash payments to voters who supported Mubarak. ICEM complained that the ink used to stain voters' fingers was easily washed off, and noted an absence of judges (supervisors) in many rural stations. ICEM noted that none of its monitors were allowed to observe vote counting after polls closed at 2200 local on September 7. ICEM asserted that this was a major area of concern.

[5](#). (SBU) ICEM's preliminary conclusions, which will be modified per any relevant developments and presented in a formal report shortly after the official results are announced, included the following:

--the election administration authority failed to ensure the integrity and independence of the process;

--voters did not receive clear information about relevant electoral processes, and many remain politically apathetic;

--access by domestic observers needs to be formalized and strengthened.

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Egyptian Center for Women's Rights  
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16. (SBU) ECWR, which has received several MEPI grants for activities other than election monitoring, devoted its resources to examining the ways in which women, especially poor women, were allegedly organized by the NDP, transported en masse to polling stations, and influenced to cast votes in favor of Mubarak in a number of locations in greater Cairo and in the governorates of Tanta and Assiyut. ECWR also charged that a number of pro-government NGOs focused on women's issues used NGO resources to mobilize voters. If true, this would be a violation of the GOE's restrictive NGO law. Among its other assertions, ECWR charged that NDP women activists offered bribes/rewards to women who voted for Mubarak.

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Egyptian Association for Democratic Development  
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17. (SBU) EADD focused its efforts on the Delta and the north coast, between Port Said and Marsa Matrouh. EADD's preliminary findings:

- turnout was low;
- pressure by NDP activists on voters to support Mubarak;
- non-resident (and unregistered) voters were sometimes allowed to vote for Mubarak;
- exclusive NDP control over voter lists in some areas;
- voting stations situated in police stations;
- the ink used to mark voters' fingers was easily washed off.

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www.shayfeen.com  
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18. (SBU) Shayfeen ("We're watching!" in colloquial Egyptian Arabic) is an organization that compiles complaints from ordinary Egyptians (submitted via phone and email) about the electoral process. As of 1400 on September 8, Shayfeen said that it had received hundreds of complaints from Egyptian citizens. Complaints focused on a number of key areas, including:

- last minute confusion over voter registration, including who was registered and where people were supposed to vote;
- concern that the indelible ink used to mark voters who had cast ballots was inconsistently applied and easy to wash off;
- assertions that NDP members dominated many polling stations and often tried to sway voters as they cast their ballots;
- assertions that People's Assembly members (i.e., sitting parliamentarians) mobilized voters for the NDP through the provision of transport and small bribes/threats to win votes for Mubarak;
- assertions that the judges supervising some polls refused to allow domestic monitors to access the stations, and did not open/close the stations at the scheduled times.

19. (SBU) Shayfeen did praise the security services for their impartiality. Shayfeen noted that its future plans include observation of the parliamentary elections and general advocacy of citizens' rights as well as evaluation of services provided by the GOE to its citizens.

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Comment  
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(C) The domestic monitors have already made their presence felt. The GOE has made no comment so far, and it is too early for the domestic media to have digested the monitors' initial press releases. Although they may appear simply to be the bearers of bad tidings for the GOE's claim that the election was free, fair, and transparent, the simple fact that domestic monitors have managed to play a major oversight role in the election is very good news. The conditions under which they operated were far from ideal, but the relatively permissive environment, significant USG funding (for both direct costs and capacity building), and the dedication of the monitors themselves have resulted in a significant development in the Egyptian political scene. In the run up to the parliamentary elections, a key issue will be what type of precedent the successful deployment on September 7 of civil society monitors throughout Egypt has set. End comment.

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